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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 SAN SALVADOR 000154

SIPDIS

FOR USDA/FAS/AGRICULTURAL COUNSELOR

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OTRA](#) [EAGR](#) [AMGT](#) [ASEC](#) [ES](#) [COUNTRY](#) [CLEARANCE](#)

SUBJECT: FAS COUNTRY CLEARANCE FOR STEPHEN HUETE, KARLA TAY, EDITH VASQUEZ, MERCEDES CRUZ AND JOSE FOLGAR

REF: GUATEMALA 00101

1. Post grants country clearance for Stephen Huete, Ag. Counselor, Karla Tay, Ag Specialist, Edith Vasquez, Marketing Assistant, Mercedes Cruz, Administrative Assistant and Jose Folgar, Clerk/Driver, to travel to San Salvador during the period of January 23-26, 2006 for the purpose of attending the Central American Marketing Conference. Travelers will be arriving by land in official vehicle, Dodge Durango, plates CD-1296, color silver, and private vehicle Honda CRV, plates CD-84BBD color silver. Control Officer for this visit is Miguel Herrera, Agricultural Specialist, Embassy phone number (503) 2278-4444, ext. 1412.

2. Clearances: Post acknowledges Mr. Stephen Huete has a Top Secret Security Clearance. Karla Tay, Edith Vasquez, Mercedes Cruz and Jose Folgar DO NOT have security clearance.

TDY visitors under COM authority who will be in-country more than ten working days are required to receive a security briefing by the Regional Security Office. Your sponsor will provide you with the date and time of your briefing.

3. Accommodations. Hotel reservations have been made at the Decameron Salinitas Hotel (Jan 23-24) in Sonsonate, El Salvador, phones (503) 2429-9004, (503) 2429-9000. Room rate is \$78.80 (without IVA). Per diem in San Salvador is presently lodging Dollars 113.00, and M&IE Dollars 78.00 - total Dollars 191. In-country Per diem is presently lodging Dollars 59.00, and M&IE Dollars 32.00 - total Dollars \$91. The hotel accepts Visa, American Express and MasterCard for payment. Legal currency in El Salvador is U.S. Dollar.

4. Administrative Support Services (ICASS) for TDY/Visitors: Action Request:

(a) If administrative support services are necessary, regardless of length of stay, then the visitor must be able to present to the Financial Management Office their travel authorization (or another fund cite) in order to pay for direct costs of the visit. Each agency, organization, or visiting delegation will be charged for the actual costs attributed to their visit and will be advised of this action. Direct charge costs include, but are not limited to: American and LES staff overtime (e.g., expediter, accommodation exchange, representational event support), field travel-lodging and M&IE by Embassy employees, vehicle rentals, long distance telephone calls, equipment rentals, office supplies and all other costs that are directly attributable to the visit.

(b) Also, for TDYers over thirty (30) days, there is a charge for ICASS support services. If your sponsoring agency is not signed up for ICASS services at post, please be prepared to sign a MOU for ICASS support services upon arrival. The agency should provide post with a written communication generated by the traveler's headquarters that confirms the agency will pay ICASS charges for the TDYers, provide the agency ICASS billing code the TDY support charges should be applied to, and authorizes the traveler to sign the ICASS invoice generated by the TDY module. Where travel is urgent, the TDYers should bring this documentation with them to ensure there are no interruptions in the provision of service. Post will not provide any service to a TDYer staying in excess of thirty days without provision of this documentation before day 31 of the TDY.

5. Airport transportation services. The Embassy will provide airport/hotel transportation if requested. The Embassy charges \$35.00 per one-way trip with expediter. Personnel who wish this service at their arrival must provide a fund cite prior to their arrival. The airport transportation fees for departures can be paid by fund cite or at the Embassy cashier prior to departure. A receipt will be provided.

(a) Taxis. GSO and the Princess Hotel recommend ACACYA taxis. This company provides 24/7 services throughout San Salvador. They provide a/c sedans and/or vans upon request. This company operates a Kiosk at the airport (located at the meet/greet lobby of the terminal, outside of the passenger's exit), tel. numbers (503) 2339-9282 or (503)2339-9271 and from Hotel Princess (503) 2298-4545 (EXT. 2540). The

company will accept reservations via their e-mail address - acacya.es@yahoo.es. The following charges are levied from the following areas: Urban areas within San Salvador to the international airport \$20.00. Embassy area (Santa Elena)/ International Airport \$21.00

(b) Hotels airport shuttle service. The following hotels have airport shuttle service either free or charging fees ranging between \$7.00 and \$10.00 per one-way trip exclusively for their guests with confirmed reservations:

- Radisson
- Princess Hotel
- Holiday Inn Hotel
- Presidente San Salvador Hotel
- Real Intercontinental

(c) Transporte Express. This company provides services throughout San Salvador. They provide minivans or 15 person vans upon request. Telephone numbers are (503)2252-9400 or (503) 2252-9401. The company offers transfers to the airport for \$30.00 each way for minivans and \$35.00 for the larger vans. They will also "meet and greet" at the airport upon arrival. Additionally, they offer hourly rates (3 hour minimum) for shopping or sightseeing excursions. Their web site is: www.transporte-express.com

16. Laptop Policy. TDY employees requiring connectivity for their properly configured State Department equipment should include the request in their Country Clearance Request cable. The traveler will be instructed to hand carry the equipment, never allow it to leave his or her possession, and to bring it directly to the Embassy upon arrival in the country. Alternatively, the equipment may be sent via secure Classified Pouch prior to the visit. No device is permitted to be connected to a State Department computer or network without the prior approval from the Information Management Officer (IMO). Approval will be based on the type of device and associated security risks, and whether the equipment and configuration have been approved by the State Department Information Technology Change Control Board (ITCCB), including up-to-date virus protection for PCs. Laptops will not be allowed onto the compound without prior written permission from the RSO office.

17. Following pertinent information addresses the most frequently asked questions concerning travel to El Salvador. Country clearance is required for all personnel entering El Salvador. USG personnel entering with diplomatic or official passports must have a valid Salvadoran visa or purchase a tourist card. Tourist cards valid for 90 days are available for a fee of USD 10.00 and may be purchased upon arrival at El Salvador airport or any land border crossing. The departure fee via commercial airlines is USD 27.00. Bearers of diplomatic passports are exempt.

18. Security information: the threat against Americans from political activity is considered low. The threat from criminal elements is critical. Random, violent crime is endemic throughout the country. Armed street robberies, carjacking, kidnapping for ransom, sexual assaults and residential burglaries threaten every person in the country. US Citizen or official travelers have not been singled out, but are subject to the same threat as all other persons in El Salvador. If travelers are not being met by Embassy personnel or taking the airport shuttle, then they should schedule their flights to arrive during daylight hours in order to get into San Salvador before nightfall. Traveling on the roads after dusk is dangerous for security and traffic safety reasons.

19. Precautions: though all areas of the country are on limits, travelers need to be aware that the downtown area of San Salvador, along with other urban areas in the country, are significantly less safe than the west side of the capital. Travel to rural areas should be undertaken with caution and scheduled so as to arrive in San Salvador or another major city by dark. Mountain roads and poorly maintained vehicles are a danger to travelers. Highway robberies and other violence are real threats. Public transportation, especially buses, both within and outside the capital is risky and is not recommended. Use radio dispatched taxis or those stationed in front of your hotel.

10. Contact with local media: the Ambassador has charged the Office of Public Affairs with reviewing and managing public diplomacy activities on behalf of the entire Embassy. All official visitors must coordinate participation in any public event with the Public Affairs Officer or Information Officer in advance. This requirement applies to interviews with radio, television and print media as well as to public speeches.

11. Health issues:

--Food: Visitors to El Salvador are at risk for gastrointestinal illnesses. Pay careful attention to the choice of food and beverages. Most well known restaurants

are considered safe.

--Drink: Bottled drinks are considered safe. Tap water is not considered potable.

--Infectious diseases: All persons traveling in El Salvador, even for a brief visit, are at risk of contracting dengue. Reduce contact with mosquitoes to reduce risk of dengue.

--Immunizations: No additional immunizations are required. Immunizations for hepatitis A, hepatitis B, and typhoid reduce the risk of contracting these diseases. Short-term visitors who adhere to good hygiene measures and follow recommendations concerning food and water consumption have a minimal chance of exposure. Tetanus immunization should be updated. Because rabies is endemic in El Salvador, visitors should avoid contact with animals whose immunization status is unknown.

--Automobile safety: Automobile accidents are among the most common causes of serious injury. Avoid driving at night. Use seat belts.

--Emergency medical services: Emergency medical care is limited in El Salvador. The health unit keeps an up-to-date list of available health facilities in San Salvador.

Travelers should arrange for medical evacuation insurance either personally or through their sponsoring agency prior to their arrival.

¶12. All U.S. Government funded travelers are reminded to utilize U.S. airlines whenever possible.

¶13. If any questions or concerns regarding security matters, please contact the U.S. Embassy telephone number (503) 2278-4444, RSO: ext. 2262.

BARCLAY